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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ABUJA 000946

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/W, INR/AA, INL  
DOE FOR GEORGE PERSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/19/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [EFIN](#) [KCOR](#) [SNAR](#) [NI](#)  
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: ACTING EFCC AND NFIU CHAIRS ON WAZIRI  
APPOINTMENT TO EFCC

REF: A. ABUJA 898  
[1](#)B. ABUJA 643  
[1](#)C. 07 ABUJA 2082  
[1](#)D. 07 ABUJA 1834

Classified By: Acting Pol. Counselor Heather Merritt for reasons 1.4. (b & d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Acting Chairman Ibrahim Lamorde and Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) Director Asishana Bayo Okauru told Poloff, INLoff and Legatt on May 18 and 19 that current Kwara State Governor Bukola Saraki (who is also head of the Governor's Forum), former Delta State Governor James Ibori and Attorney General Michael Aondoakaa are behind the nomination of Farida Waziri as EFCC Chairperson (ref A), having finally convinced President Yar'Adua to go ahead with the appointment. They allege the trio brought Waziri in to quash the ongoing investigations of the Saraki family, Ibori and other former governors. They noted Waziri's close relationships with Saraki and former Benue Governor George Akume (facing charges of corruption) as evidence of conflicts of interest that should keep Waziri out of the position. They asserted that the EFCC has already been weakened as a result of continuing uncertainty that started with Ribadu's reassignment to training. Lamorde's allegations are troubling, but are self-serving and unproven. We will watch Waziri's tenure at EFCC very closely to assess her intentions. Meanwhile, she could have a rocky Senate confirmation process and, as in the U.S. system, cannot assume duties of office even in an acting capacity until confirmed. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Poloff and INLoff met with Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Acting Chairman Ibrahim Lamorde and Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) Director Asishana Bayo Okauru on May 18. Lamorde and Okauru both indicated they were surprised by the GON announcement on May 15 of Waziri as new Acting EFCC Chair, though they were aware that Waziri's name had been put forward (along with Lamorde's and Roselyn Wushishi, an unknown individual) for vetting for the position early in 2008. Lamorde, who was in Singapore and en route to Australia, cut his trip short, returning to Abuja on May 18. Both Lamorde and Okauru indicated their desire to remain in their positions on May 19. On May 20, Lamorde told INLoff and Legatt that the Inspector General of Police (IGP)

Mike Okiro informed him he is to be reassigned to Ningi Local Government Area in Bauchi State. (COMMENT. Though the move is a lateral move in terms of position rank, the reassignment to a Local Government Area removes him completely from the anti-corruption fight. END COMMENT.) Lamorde expressed concern for his safety in this fairly isolated and remote Local Government Area given the enemies he has made in his years fighting high-profile criminal elements. Reports emerged late on May 20 that Independent Corrupt Practices and Related Offences Commission (ICPC) Director of Operations Johnson A. Ogunhakin was directed by IGP Okiro to move to the position of EFCC Director of Operations. Sotonye Wakama, formerly of the IGP's Monitoring Unit, was reassigned to Director of Operations at the ICPC.

13. (C) In a May 22 meeting with the Ambassador, Secretary to the Federal Government (SFG) Ambassador Babagana Kingibe noted that what was behind President Yar'Adua's move to officially replace Ribadu is that he did not feel the EFCC was doing its job properly under the rule of law, was too personalized, and needed to be strengthened. He further told the Ambassador that IGP Okiro had no authority to appoint people to the EFCC, rather that authority rested with the current Acting Chair, Mrs. Waziri, who Ribadu had worked under. Kingibe added that she was well qualified and had the maturity to do the job. Ambassador noted our concern about the EFCC staying on course on its transparency and independence and that when appropriate we would reach out to Waziri to also express our concern.

#### THE STORY BEHIND WAZIRI'S APPOINTMENT

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14. (C) Lamorde and Okauru maintained that Waziri's appointment is a move by ex-governors (under the leadership of former Delta Governor James Ibori), serving Kwara Governor Bukola Saraki, and Attorney General Michael Aondoakaa to weaken the EFCC and derail investigations of Ibori, the Saraki family and several other key former governors, including Orji Uzor Kalu (Abia), Ibrahim Saminu Turaki (Jigawa -- currently serving as a Senator), Peter Odili (Rivers), Chimaroke Nnamani (Enugu -- currently serving as a Senator), George Akume (Benue-- currently serving as a Senator) and Diepreye Alamieyeseigha (Bayelsa). Lamorde told us the three (Ibori, Saraki, and Aondoakaa) used former Inspector General of Police (IGP) and current Chair of President Yar'Adua's Police Service Commission Mohammed Diko Yusufu (IGP under Murtala Mohammed and Obasanjo's military rule) as a front to push Waziri's appointment with President Yar'Adua and give the appearance that Waziri was put forward by the Commission.

15. (C) Although Lamorde says Yar'Adua resisted previous attempts by the trio to put Waziri forward, he feels Yar'Adua's poor health and consequent inability to handle stress weakened his resolve. (COMMENT: The President has since come out on several occasions in the press to talk about his health, noting that he is strong enough to govern, and been out on the campaign trail. END COMMENT.) Lamorde relayed that reportedly two weeks ago Yar'Adua told a former governor he was pleased with the EFCC and allegedly considering appointing Lamorde as Chairman. According to Lamorde, when the same former governor asked Yar'Adua what happened following the May 15 Waziri announcement, Yar'Adua reportedly stuttered and stammered, then offered that he is going to appoint Lamorde as Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC). (COMMENT: This image of Yar'Adua expressing himself appears to be a bit out of character of what we know and have seen. END COMMENT.) Lamorde noted that the ICPC authorizing law requires that the Chairman be a former judge, which Lamorde is not. He maintained that the Secretary to the Government of the Federation Babagana Kingibe is also part of the group hoping to weaken the EFCC. Kingibe's motivations, he contended, stem from his continuing political ambitions.

(COMMENT. We know Kingibe has strong political ambitions; however, his role on EFCC issues is unclear. END COMMENT.)

¶6. (C) Lamorde says the trio managed to keep their moves carefully under wraps, with even high ranking Villa officials such as Chief of Staff (COS) Abdullahi Mohammed and Special Assistant for Communications Olusegun Adeniyi (both of whom are strong supporters of the EFCC according to Lamorde) being kept out of the loop until the announcement was made. Lamorde told us he underestimated Ibori's influence. Lamorde said he had expected the decision would have to go through the COS and that his alliance with Mohammed would shield him. Lamorde said Adeniyi told him he had warned Yar'Adua when Waziri's name came up in December that her appointment would mean "turning the EFCC over to Ibori and Saraki."

¶7. (C) NOTE: Refs C and D report on the ongoing investigation and charges brought against former governor Ibori. Lamorde told us the EFCC has drafted charges against Kwara Governor Bukola Saraki and his father (Kwara State godfather) Olusola Saraki in relation to their involvement with Societe Generale Bank of Nigeria. Lamorde alleges Bukola used the money misappropriated from the bank to finance his electoral campaign. END NOTE.

#### WAZIRI'S QUESTIONABLE TIES / CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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¶8. (C) Lamorde and Okauru maintain that since retirement from the Police, Waziri has had financial troubles, though they also chuckled "who in Nigeria couldn't use more money." They noted that she has a close relationship with the Saraki family of Kwara, hinting that she and Olusola Saraki may have had an intimate relationship. Lamorde said when Waziri took over as Director of the Police Special Fraud Unit (where he

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and Ribadu were both working at the time), the first case she asked to be informed about was a case being developed against the Saraki family. The investigation was never completed.

¶9. (C) Lamorde maintained Waziri's relationship with former Benue State Governor George Akume is a clear conflict of interest. Earlier this year, when the EFCC filed charges against Akume and required that he hand over his passport, Waziri appeared at the EFCC with Akume, personally signing to take possession of his passport and personally vouching for his continued presence in Nigeria. (COMMENT: Although Waziri appeared as a private citizen in vouching for Akume, she did so after her name had already been floated for the Chairmanship position. Interestingly, Governor Akume, AG Aondoakaa and Waziri are all members of the relatively small Tiv ethnic group from Benue State. END COMMENT.)

#### THE FUTURE OF EFCC

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¶10. (C) Lamorde and Okauru both voiced concern over the integrity and effectiveness of EFCC under Waziri's leadership. They were skeptical that Waziri could, even if she so desired, extricate herself from under the control of the ex-governors and Saraki. Okauru expressed concern that although the NFIU is considered to be independent of the EFCC, Waziri's appointment could significantly hamper the NFIU's mission as well. Okauru recommended that the USG suspend support of the NFIU and EFCC until Waziri's effectiveness at the helm of the EFCC could be judged.

¶11. (C) In general, Lamorde and Okauru reported that morale is low and productivity has already been impacted at the EFCC and NFIU as a result of the continuing uncertainty. Okauru said Lamorde had just succeeded in calming concerns following the reassignment of Ribadu to a study course and things were just starting to operate as normal at the EFCC and NFIU. Everyone is "shocked, looking around and not sure of the direction to take," he told us.

¶12. (C) COMMENT. Lamorde and Okauru's comments need to be

considered in context -- both men rose to their positions under former Chairman Nuhu Ribadu's guidance and Lamorde also had aspirations for the chairmanship. That said, they have raised serious and significant concerns about Waziri's ability to objectively lead the EFCC. However, we note that Ribadu's objectivity in pursuing investigations and prosecutions was also criticized, and he was alleged to have acted at the direction of former President Obasanjo.

¶13. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED. President Yar'Adua has criticized the EFCC's professionalism, what he called its "sloppy investigations" and its conviction rate under Ribadu (Ref. B), and we note that that the EFCC has little to show after five months of Lamorde's temporary stewardship. A U.S. Department of Treasury technical consultant ended his TDY at NFIU prematurely earlier this year as it appeared the NFIU and EFCC were uninterested or unable to take advantage of his expertise. As well, the reassignments may well be the first step in the housecleaning we've been hearing is coming in Yar'Adua's overall Administration to remove remaining Obasanjo loyalists. We will monitor closely Waziri's performance to assess whether she is able to reenergize the EFCC, show respect for the rule of law, and is transparent, or whether her appointment really does signal a lessening of the GON's commitment to pursue corruption. Meanwhile, disagreement between the Administration and the Senate over Waziri's ability to assume the EFCC's leadership in an acting role prior to confirmation threatens to further complicate what looks to be an already contentious confirmation process.

END COMMENT.

SANDERS